PROGRAM • PROGRAMME
EXCELLENCE
RED SEAL · SCEAU ROUGE

Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship (CCDA)

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

2013 - 2016

CANADIAN STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE FOR SKILLED TRADES

INTERPROVINCIAL STANDARD
CANADA
NORME INTERPROVINCIALE

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Introduction

This document presents the strategic directions of the Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship (CCDA) for the period 2013 to 2016. In concrete terms, the strategic directions translate into four strategic priorities, each supported by a few selected initiatives. Progress against the 2013-2016 strategic priorities will be reported through the CCDA Annual Reports.

The CCDA is responsible for the management and delivery of the Interprovincial Standards Red Seal Program (known as the Red Seal Program). Through the Red Seal Program, interprovincial standards are developed and maintained for the Red Seal trades, promoting greater harmonization of provincial/territorial processes and requirements for skilled trades training certification and standards.

The CCDA is a voluntary partnership between the federal, provincial and territorial governments. As an organization, the CCDA does not have vested regulatory powers regarding training and certification in the skilled trades. However, the individual CCDA directors of apprenticeship, and their organizations, which are responsible for apprenticeship and trade certification in their respective jurisdictions, may hold regulatory powers through specific provincial/territorial legislation.

For planning purposes, it is useful to think of the CCDA's activities as being either enduring, and forming part of a 'sustaining' agenda, or special, and part of a 'change' agenda. The CCDA's / Red Seal Program's 'sustaining agenda' is composed of the ongoing activities that are essential for the CCDA and the Red Seal Program to conduct year-after-year to deliver on its mandate. These ongoing activities, such as the development and maintenance of Red Seal standards and examinations, research, promotion of the Red Seal Program and engagement with stakeholders, represent the majority of the CCDA's work in delivering the Red Seal Program. These contribute to the outcomes from the CCDA / Red Seal Program that will be measured using a number of performance indicators.

Since the operating environment of the CCDA and the Red Seal Program evolves constantly, bringing new socio-economic challenges and pressures, the CCDA and the Red Seal Program must adjust some of their ongoing activities to be best positioned to succeed. The necessary adjustments to the ongoing activities of the CCDA are what make up its 'change agenda'; in other words, the strategic directions that the CCDA must follow and invest in over the next three years to best respond to its changing environment, to support the CCDA's purpose and ongoing activities. These special items, presented as the strategic priorities and initiatives, are not ongoing activities but rather activities that will end once the adjustment is complete or become part of the CCDA's ongoing business and sustaining agenda.

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Background

Mandate and Objectives of the CCDA

The CCDA has the custodial authority and is responsible for the management and delivery of the Interprovincial Standards Red Seal Program. The CCDA collaborates with industry and other regulatory authorities to facilitate the development of a skilled trades labour force and to facilitate the mobility of this labour force in Canada by means of a system of common interprovincial competency standards.

The CCDA enables members and the CCDA as a national collective of Directors of Apprenticeship to engage in research and evidence-based analysis in support of the CCDA's strategic directions as well as the objectives and strategic directions of the members' respective apprenticeship and trade certification systems and programs.

Purpose

The purpose of the CCDA is:

- To provide a forum for inter-jurisdictional collaboration to facilitate the development of a certified, highly skilled and mobile trades workforce in Canada; and,

- To provide a means by which decisions made by members about their respective apprenticeship and trade certification programs are informed by the most current and accurate evidence-based statistical analysis and research.

Governing Principles

The CCDA is committed to the following governing principles:

a) Engagement:

- Provide the opportunity for all members to participate fully in all aspects of the Red Seal Program.

- Provide the opportunity for stakeholders to participate fully in defining common interprovincial standards for the skilled trades, as exemplified by the Red Seal Program.
- Develop and maintain collaborative relationships with stakeholders on issues of common interest.

b) Transparency:

- Pursue its mandate in an open and transparent fashion towards its members and stakeholders.
- Provide for means of communicating its decisions, activities and results to its members and stakeholders in a timely fashion.

c) Accountability:

- Be accountable to its members and stakeholders.

d) Decision-making:

- Provide for policy and direction that are guided by strong evidence-based analysis and supported by clear justification.

Analysis of the CCDA Operating Environment

In 2010-2011 the global economy remained fragile. The Canadian economy recovered from the global recession better than most other industrialized countries. The economic downturn in 2008 and 2009 affected industries which employ Red Seal tradespersons, namely construction, manufacturing and natural resources. Apprenticeship registrations decreased overall during the recession. Industry stakeholders and governments are increasingly concerned about ensuring that the skilled workforce is in place to meet the needs of the labour market, especially with modest economic growth and pronounced shortages in the skilled trades in some sectors and regions (e.g. construction, oil sands, mining and shipbuilding).These skills shortages will be exacerbated by new and on-going megaprojects that will stimulate skilled trades employment.

There are many significant and persistent challenges in Canada facing the provincial and territorial apprenticeship and trade certification systems, which have implications on or for the Red Seal Program. These include: an aging workforce with current or anticipated skills shortages (especially in some sectors, regions and trades), barriers to completion, limited employer participation in

apprenticeship training, the need to increase the participation of some groups in the trades workforce (e.g. women, Aboriginals, immigrants and youth), regional differences in numbers of Red Seals awarded (e.g. in Quebec) and disparities in essential, technical or other skills levels among some of the trades workforce. Concerns about skills shortages is increasing pressure on governments to facilitate the entry of more internationally trained skilled trades workers into the workforce, and an increased focus on foreign qualification recognition processes. This also underscores the importance of the mobility of skilled trades workers across Canada.

As part of its efforts to continuously improve the Red Seal Program and respond to labour market needs, the CCDA launched the ***Strengthening the Red Seal*** initiative in 2009 to enhance skills assessment through the exploration of an enhanced occupational standards model, and forms of assessment to complement the current Red Seal examination. The model would place an increased emphasis on industry-driven standards that are specific and measurable, and would support the development of multiple forms of assessment. This would help to ensure that skilled tradespeople, especially those individuals who gained their skills and experience outside of the formal apprenticeship system, have a fair opportunity to demonstrate competency.

Now that Governments must recognize each other's trade certificates under Chapter 7 of the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT), the Red Seal endorsement must be considered within a broader context beyond labour mobility. The labour mobility of certified journeypersons through the automatic recognition of their credentials is but one element of the Red Seal's value. Greater emphasis has been placed on the Red Seal's value proposition as industry's standard of excellence based on the reasonable assurance that the Red Seal endorsement signals a high standard of qualification. Many stakeholders have raised the need to promote greater harmonization in requirements, and consistency in training and curriculum, across jurisdictions to increase the employability and labour mobility of skilled tradespeople as an issue.

As the Red Seal Program is an industry-driven program, the CCDA works with multiple partners and stakeholders to address some of the key challenges to Canada's apprenticeship and trade certification systems that affect the Program. This includes partners such as the Interprovincial Alliance of Apprenticeship Board Chairs (IPA) (comprised of the Board Chairs of apprenticeship training and certification systems in the provinces and territories), and the Forum of Labour Market Ministers (FLMM), and a broad range of stakeholders, including those representing industry sectors, national associations, workers and employers.

Governments are concerned about managing expenditures and reducing debt. Increased fiscal constraints and reduced capacity at all levels of government will further intensify pressure on the Red Seal Program to be efficient and demonstrate value. Other pressures and demands on the CCDA and Red Seal Program include: an array of initiatives; demands for a solid evidence-base of research and data to support initiatives and jurisdictions' policy and program development; and increasing stakeholder expectations for accountability, transparency, engagement and responsiveness. There is also pressure from stakeholders for Red Seal designation of additional trades. The CCDA needs to ensure that the Program continues to be responsive to labour market demand for skilled and mobile tradespeople, while also ensuring that there are clear guidelines for designation and de-designation of Red Seal trades, and that efficiencies are maximized in investments made in the Red Seal Program.

In light of these challenges, the CCDA needs to prioritize in order to develop its strategic priorities for the next few years. The development of its priorities has been influenced by input from stakeholders through feedback sought at a meeting of national stakeholders on March 9, 2012.

Strategic Priorities for 2013 to 2016

At the CCDA strategic planning session held in Regina, Saskatchewan on June 7, 2012 the following four strategic priorities were developed, supported by a few strategic initiatives.

Strategic Priority 1 – Standards and Assessments

Enhance Red Seal standards and assessments

- Develop and implement enhanced standards that meet current and future needs of industry for the skilled trades
- Continue to explore multiple assessment approaches to adapt to the evolving needs of the labour market while maintaining the rigour of the Red Seal Program
- Redefine criteria for designating and de-designating Red Seal trades, and review the renewal cycle for Red Seal products.

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Strategic Priority 2 – Harmonization

Promote the harmonization of interjurisdictional processes and requirements for skilled trades training, certification and standards

- Develop and advocate the adoption of more common approaches and tools for the assessment and recognition of the experience and credentials of domestic and foreign trained workers
- Identify areas where there are significant differences in the scope of trades and training and certification requirements between jurisdictions to encourage harmonization.

Strategic Priority 3 – Promotion

Increase awareness of the Red Seal as a competitive advantage and an assurance of quality

- Create and implement a new branding strategy for the Red Seal Program, focused on its value in a post-AIT context
- Enhance collaboration of federal-provincial-territorial governments, partners and industry in Red Seal and apprenticeship promotional activities to maximize impact.

Strategic Priority 4 – Engagement

Increase the engagement and participation of partners and stakeholders in the Red Seal Program

- Build upon existing strategies to further engage national industry in the Red Seal Program and the CCDA's activities.